

# The HIGHLANDS Current



Willow  
and  
Rush  
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AUGUST 4, 2023

NYPA Newspaper of the Year

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Jay Nicholas, a Magazzino driver known as "the donkey whisperer" Photo by J. Asher

## The Donkeys of Philipstown

*'Living art' stabled behind Italian museum*

By Joey Asher

As it turns out, the 14 donkeys that live behind Magazzino in Philipstown are a long-term exhibit at the Italian art museum.

"They are a piece of living art," said Giorgio Spanu, the Garrison resident who founded Magazzino with his wife, Nancy Olnick.

"Having the donkeys here brings us back to the idea that art can be for everyone, even the donkeys," added Vittorio Calabrese, executive director of the museum, which is located on Route 9 just south of its intersection with 301.

Calabrese said the animals, which are endangered Sardinian donkeys (*Asinelli Sardi*), highlight the museum's focus on the anti-establishment movement known as Arte Povera, or "poor art," that started in the 1960s. Its artists use non-traditional materials such as soil, rags, twigs and even live animals.

Indeed, one of Arte Povera's celebrated practitioners, Jannis Kounellis, wowed the Italian art world in 1969 with a work called "Untitled (Cavelli)" that consisted of 12 horses tethered in temporary quarters in an underground garage in Rome.

(Continued on Page 20)

## Central Hudson Asks to Increase Electricity, Gas Rates

*Officials say billing fix should come first*

By Leonard Sparks

Central Hudson is proposing to increase the rates it charges to deliver electricity and gas, drawing a backlash from elected officials who say the utility

should first remedy the billing problems at the center of an ongoing state investigation.

The company said on Monday (July 31) that it will seek approval for delivery rates that in 2024-25 would increase the average residential electric bill by 16 percent and gas bills by 19 percent. It said its "typical" customer would be charged about \$30 per month more for each service.

The rates approved by the state Public Service Commission after it reviews a utility's finances are typically much lower than what a utility requests.

In 2020, Central Hudson proposed raising the average monthly residential bill by \$7.76 for electricity and \$9.45 for gas.

The PSC instead approved in November

(Continued on Page 7)



**FARM FUN** — The annual Putnam County Country Fest & 4-H Showcase, hosted by the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Putnam County, took place in Kent on July 29 and 30 and included fire trucks, a puppet show, horse and pony rides, bubbles, carnival games, barbecued corn, live music, giant slides and face painting. For more photos, see [highlandscurrent.org](https://highlandscurrent.org). Photo by Ross Corsair

## Mail Sorting to Move From Beacon Next Month

*Regional hubs one of USPS cost-saving measures*

By Jeff Simms

Beacon mail carriers on Sept. 9 will begin driving to Newburgh to pick up mail from a regional sorting center near New York Stewart International Airport before traveling across the Newburgh-

Beacon Bridge to deliver the letters and packages, according to the heads of two local unions that represent postal employees.

The U.S. Postal Service, however, has been mum on the change. Reached on Monday (July 31), Mark Lawrence, a Postal Service representative, would only reiterate a statement the agency made to *The Current* in March: It is moving forward with the creation of more than

400 regional Sorting & Delivery Centers nationwide, including at Stewart, as part of a 10-year cost-saving plan.

The locations of only 24 centers have been announced, including the one at Stewart. As of Sept. 9, the Stewart center will handle sorting for Beacon, as well as Newburgh, Cornwall, New Windsor and 10 other communities in Orange County. Sorting is

(Continued on Page 17)

**It's in your hands now!**

See Page 3

# 5Q FIVE QUESTIONS: MARC SABIN

By Michael Turton

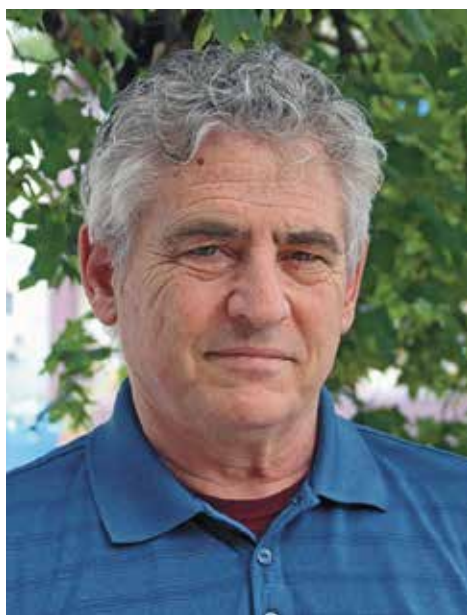
**M**arc Sabin, an executive with Advanced Resilient Biocarbon in Nelsonville, was among a group that met recently at the White House with the national directors of food security and climate change to discuss the African Great Green Wall Project.

## What is the project?

It was launched by the African Union in 2007. It seeks to plant a trillion trees across the greater Sahel region, the widest section of Africa, a nearly 5,000-mile span that includes 21 countries. The region lies below the Sahara Desert and, while it isn't that dry, its climate is arid. Among the devastating effects of climate change in Africa is the expansion of the desert southward into the Sahel, which includes millions of people and productive farmland. The project aims to stem the encroachment of the desert while sustaining agriculture.

## How would trees help?

It's agroforestry, mixing farming and forestry. Trees provide shade and help to keep more water in the soil. The goal is to provide land where people can grow higher-value crops, not just rice and millet. You can see this approach locally on a farm along



Route 9D between Cold Spring and Garrison; it's small fields surrounded by trees.

## Your company doesn't plant trees; why is it involved?

We've been in the business of climate repair for 10 years and biochar is key in addressing that mission. Biomass waste is burned in the absence of oxygen, a process called pyrolysis, converting it into biochar, which can enhance soil when blended

with minerals and compost that support the microbial life of the soil biome. It can also be used to extract chemicals and toxins from water and soil. Biochar prevents carbon from being released into the atmosphere by storing it in other products and materials, including soil enhancements.

## How do you get biochar into African soil?

We look for carbon-rich material, such as woody waste from softwoods or hardwoods. We create joint ventures in areas where there is a good source of waste, such as a forest being harvested, lumber mills or areas where abundant dead trees could contribute to forest fires. Our joint ventures install systems to process that waste into various forms of char. That creates jobs and financial support for the local community, in addition to reducing waste and cleaning the environment. We identify markets, such as Africa, for the char we produce. We handle sales, distribution and sometimes delivery. Profits are split with our joint venture partners. We also have projects in Colombia, China, Singapore and Malaysia.

## What challenges does the African Great Green Wall pose?

A big difficulty is Africa's reputation for not having funds that are pledged get down to the people whose lives a project is intended to help. Very little of the money pledged to the Great Green Wall has been exchanged, and a lot of money is needed. We're still dealing with climate-change denial, particularly among people on the investment side. That's changing with the Biden administration, with infrastructure investments in new, greener technologies. We've found the biggest opportunity is in the European Union. They've set up a climate bond, with specific, science-based taxonomy that provides the rules that have to be abided by.

Visit [highlandscurrent.org](http://highlandscurrent.org) for news updates and latest information.

# ON THE SPOT

By Michael Turton

What song instantly says "summer" to you?

"The Boys of Summer," by Don Henley. It takes me right back to summer of '86.



Teresa Greenough, Beacon

"Life Got Crazy," by Mike., because summer always gets crazy.



Joe Kay, Mahopac

"Summertime," from Porgy and Bess. It's such a beautiful song.



Martee Levi, Philipstown



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Highlands Current Inc.

Board of Directors: Damon Banks, Christine Bockelmann, Gwendolyn Bounds, Susan Brune, David Duffy, Kyle Good, Nicholas Groombridge, Todd Haskell, Robert Lanier, Mel Laytner, Bevis Longstreth, Joseph Plummer, Frances S. Reilly, Michelle Rivas

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Gordon Stewart (1939 - 2014)

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Chip Rowe

[editor@highlandscurrent.org](mailto:editor@highlandscurrent.org)

## SENIOR EDITOR

Leonard Sparks

## BEACON EDITOR

Jeff Simms

## ARTS EDITOR

Alison Rooney

[arts@highlandscurrent.org](mailto:arts@highlandscurrent.org)

## REPORTERS

Liz Schevchuk Armstrong  
Joey Asher • Celia Barbour  
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Michael Turton

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Pierce Strudler

## ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Michele Gedney

For information on advertising:

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## MEMBERSHIP

Emily Hare

[membership@highlandscurrent.org](mailto:membership@highlandscurrent.org)

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Teresa Lagerman



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## Tell us what you think

The Current welcomes letters to the editor on its coverage and local issues. Submissions are selected by the editor (including from comments posted to our social media pages) to provide a variety of opinions and voices, and all are subject to editing for accuracy, clarity and length, and to remove personal attacks. Letters may be emailed to [editor@highlandscurrent.org](mailto:editor@highlandscurrent.org) or mailed to The Highlands Current, 142 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516. The writer's full name, village or city, and email or phone number must be included, but only the name and village or city will be published. For our complete editorial policies, see [highlandscurrent.org/editorial-standards](http://highlandscurrent.org/editorial-standards).

## LETTERS AND COMMENTS

### Actors' strike

Though I don't always agree with the opinions published in the letters to the editor, I appreciate reading different viewpoints and believe that is an important function of your paper. However, the comments printed in the July 28 issue in response to your coverage of the Writers Guild of America/Screen Actors Guild strike were outliers and struck me as disrespectful and immature. It's not surprising that these comments came from social media but it is unfortunate that you chose to give them oxygen in print.

As a theater designer and technician, I am routinely amazed by the effort, persistence and raw skill that performers display while practicing their craft. They minimally deserve as much respect as any studied tradesperson. If readers have contrary opinions over the details of the labor dispute I am happy to read them, but comments that amount to "get a real job" are ignorant and serve no purpose other than to demean the subjects of the article. In addition, you encourage similar responses by highlighting them in your paper. I hope you will use better judgment.

Dan Vatsky, *Beacon*

I had similar sentiments. I was also more than a little disappointed that no Black/BIPOC actors who live in Beacon were

included or interviewed for this piece, especially since I was in a community meeting with the editor about better relations between Beacon residents and the paper.

Twinkle Burke, *Beacon*

*Burke has been a member of SAG/AFTRA since 1988.*

I highly applaud the impassioned comments targeting the WGA/SAG strike. Their logic is spot-on. After all, any intelligent person knows that TV shows, movies and other scripted entertainments occur through magic and witchcraft. No real work is involved!

Goldee Greene, *Garrison*

### Storm cleanup

It is the height of hypocrisy for Republican representatives such as state Sen. Rob Rolison, state Assembly Member Matt Slater and especially U.S. Rep. Mike Lawler to present themselves as local saviors in the aftermath of July's flooding ("Push for Disaster Aid Begins," July 14).

All of them are members of a party that lies about climate change and actively obstructs climate action while the effects of man-made climate change destroy our homes, businesses, roads and other critical infrastructure. All participate in this

obstruction in their roles as legislators at the state and federal level. But Lawler has particular nerve, given how often he spreads misinformation about gas stoves and whines about New York State's environmental policies, and given his past work as a fossil-fuel lobbyist.

These men are climate arsonists, and we don't praise arsonists for putting out the fires they set. They should not get praise for spending our hard-earned taxpayer dollars on disaster recovery efforts if they continue to make more such disasters inevitable by obstructing meaningful climate action.

Steven Altarescu, *Putnam Valley*

That was an interesting list of roads that suffered damage in Philipstown: Old Albany Post Road, Chapman Road, Avery Road, Philipse Brook Road (the eastern end of Snake Hill Road) and the eastern stretch of Indian Brook Road ("Elected Officials and Public Confront Storm Damage," July 28).

Of course, there's something else all these roads have in common — they're all unpaved dirt roads.

Putnam County Legislator Nancy Montgomery asked: "Are we keeping in mind what the big fixes will be to manage this going forward?" The answer is obvious, no?

Felix Salmon, *Garrison*

### Trails needed

As a trail biker, I recommend that Beacon and Fishkill, along with Dutchess County planners and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, consider a trail along or in place of the now-abandoned MTA rail line from Beacon to Hopewell (*Letters and Comments*, July 21).

Many people today are out walking or biking on the rail trails that exist in Putnam, Dutchess, Orange and Westchester, and adding a trail between Beacon and Hopewell only increases the extension of existing trails. To bike from the Hopewell Depot to Beacon is something I've dreamed of since the MTA no longer uses the rails between Beacon and Brewster. I hope we can move forward with planning for a trail on the right of way.

Jeff Kover, *East Fishkill*

### Firefighting

Thank you for highlighting the important and dangerous work of fighting forest fires ("5 Questions: Joseph Pries," July 28). A lot of people like to complain about the smoke from the Quebec fires but have little sense of how difficult the work is.

Hopefully the lessons learned can help us locally with fire prevention and mitigation. Thank you, Forest Ranger Joseph Pries, for your work and dedication.

Harper Langston, *via Instagram*



An open letter

# Keep our residential neighborhoods *residential*

Dear City of Beacon Planning Board, Mayor Kyriacou, and Beacon residents,

Let's not walk blindly into unintended consequences or set a damaging precedent. We ask the City of Beacon to decline Prophecy Theater's site approval and a special use permit request to open a 150-person event space at the historic Reformed Church of Beacon and graveyard at 1113 Wolcott Avenue.

Beacon's zoning code doesn't allow event venues in this neighborhood because it is **residential**, not a business district. A commercial operation such as Prophecy Theater—which would include an event space—is **incompatible** with our neighborhood and would irreparably damage our quality of life.

Prophecy Theater plans to attract large groups of people who will arrive and leave at the same time—potentially multiple times a day. **This is a fact the applicants of Prophecy Theater divulged only as the Planning Board's public hearing closed.** Upwards of 500 people could descend on our neighborhood, each day, four days a week as a result.

The greatly increased **noise, traffic, trespassing, parking, and safety issues** created by an event space on this site would place an unnecessary burden on our police department and other emergency services. What a terrible waste of our taxpayer dollars. And for **no** public benefit.

Because the site lacks sufficient parking, Prophecy Theater plans to encourage patrons to use Tompkins Firehouse Parking Lot, Municipal Plaza, Beekman Street, Cross Street Lot, Cliff Street Lot, Beacon Center Lot, and Beacon MTA. Patrons will either use these valuable public parking spots or merely find the nearest ones in our residential communities. Either way, the outcome isn't good for Beacon residents.

**The applicants have admitted that Prophecy Theater would have an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhood, and their own sound experts' advice is for neighbors to keep their windows closed if they don't like the noise.** How would you feel if this were you?

We're lucky and grateful that Beacon is already so rich with arts centers, event spaces, music venues, and galleries that appropriately operate in the city's business districts. The city will not suffer if this project doesn't progress.

**Our concerns are not based on opinion alone. It's clear that the Prophecy Theater proposal does not meet the standards to issue a Special Permit as laid out in § 223-18.B (a), (c), (d) and § 223-24.7.D(1) (b), (c) of the Beacon City Code.\***

If the Planning Board approves a special use permit for the transformation of a historic church and graveyard into a commercial event space in a residential zone, it would be setting a harmful precedent for the entire city; one anybody living in a Beacon residential neighborhood should be very concerned about.

## Because your neighborhood may be next.

Respectfully,

Concerned neighbors of the Reformed Church of Beacon  
(ProtectBeaconNeighborhoods@gmail.com)

\*Standards included in the City of Beacon Planning Board public documents: Special Permit Site Plan and Certificate of Appropriateness Approvals, 11 July 2023 meeting (see <https://beaconny.gov/index.php/agendas-minutes/>)

# Three of 'Newburgh Four' Released

## Case cited as example of FBI entrapment

By Leonard Sparks

A federal judge admonished the FBI as she ordered the release of three City of Newburgh men convicted in 2010 of plotting to shoot down planes at the nearby Stewart Air National Guard Base and bomb a synagogue and Jewish center.

Judge Colleen McMahon of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York rejected prosecutors' objections in agreeing on July 27 to the "compassionate release" of Laguerre Payen, and David Williams and Onta Williams, who are not related.

Along with a fourth man, James Cromitie (who has yet to file a petition for release), they were convicted by a jury of terrorism charges in October 2010. The men were often referred to in press coverage as the Newburgh Four.

In 2011, McMahon sentenced the men to a mandated minimum of 25 years in federal prison, but at the time she called the punishment "probably greater than necessary." McMahon said she "reluctantly" upheld the legality of the "unjust" sentences on appeal.

Her order last month reduced their sentences to time served plus 90 days and specified that Payen, who has a severe mental illness, be released to a residential program with support services. In her ruling, McMahon said the three men were not "sophisticated international terrorists," but "hapless, easily manipulated and penurious petty criminals" recruited by Cromitie to be lookouts.

Sam Braverman, who represented Payen, said during an interview on Sunday (July 30) with *Spectrum News* that "it was a tremendous day" when he read the ruling. "Everybody knows that these men lost 15

years that they didn't have to lose," he said.

It was Cromitie whom Shahed Hussain, a convicted felon working as an undercover FBI informant, befriended in 2008 at the Masjid al-Ikhlas mosque in Newburgh and offered \$250,000 and other inducements to bomb Jewish facilities and shoot down planes at Stewart.

The men were arrested on May 20, 2009, after they placed fake bombs supplied by the FBI outside a synagogue and community center in the Riverdale section of the Bronx.

While the FBI celebrated the arrests as a successful operation in its post-9/11 war on terrorism, and called the men "extremely violent," their lawyers, family and friends

described them as petty criminals and drug users who had no terrorist ties and were entrapped by Hussain and the agency.

The fake bombs and inert Stinger missile launchers used in the sting were supplied by the FBI, according to McMahon. Hussain had to drive the men to Riverdale to carry out the supposed bombing because none of them had a car, the judge noted. Once there, Hussain had to "arm" the fake bomb because Cromitie, "despite his 'training,' could not figure out how to do it," McMahon wrote.

She accused the FBI of adding the guard base as a target so the agency could pursue the 25-year mandatory minimum. The case and the entrapment concerns were also the focus of a documentary, *The Newburgh Sting*, released in April 2014.

"The real lead conspirator was the United

States," McMahon said. "The FBI invented the conspiracy; identified the targets; manufactured the ordnance; federalized what would otherwise have been a state crime ... and picked the day for the 'mission.'"

Her order also highlights Hussain's criminal history, which the judge said includes bankruptcy fraud, immigration fraud and tax evasion.

Hussain, thought to be in Pakistan, is being sued by the family of some of the 20 people killed on Oct. 6, 2018, in Schoharie County when the brakes failed on a limousine belonging to a company he owned and that his son, Nauman Hussain, operated.

In May, a jury convicted Nauman Hussain of 20 counts of second-degree manslaughter, and a judge sentenced him that same month to serve between five and 15 years in prison.



**TUNNEL VISION** — Mary Mechalakos said on Wednesday (Aug. 2) that she is "90 percent of the way there" to completing a mural in the pedestrian tunnel under the Metro-North tracks in Cold Spring. She began painting in late June after the Village Board approved her abstract design. But then the rains came, and the tunnel flooded twice. Her artwork "held up with minimal damage," she reports. Once Mechalakos puts away her brushes, the Cold Spring Highway Department will coat the artwork with a sealant to make it vandal-resistant.

Photos by Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong and Michael Turton

### Local Officials

This is a list of elected and appointed officials at the local, state and federal level and how to contact them with your praise or protests.

### Local Government Video Guide

OK, it's not Netflix, but here's a list of sites where you can watch videos of local and county public meetings.

### How They Voted (Congress)

Summaries of consequential and newsworthy legislation in the U.S. House and how Rep. Mike Lawler (Philipstown) and Rep. Pat Ryan (Beacon) voted. Updated weekly.

### Storm Updates and Resources

Storm-watcher resources and contacts for when the power goes out.

### Community Calendar

This is the full Monty — we only have room for the highlights in print.

## What's Online at HighlandsCurrent.org

These resources can be accessed through the pulldown menu on the top of each page, under "Resources" and "Reader Guide."

### Back Issues

This is an archive of our past issues, in PDF format, from June 2012 to date, except for the latest issue, which is emailed to *Current* members on Friday morning.

### Real-Estate Data

These graphs are created on-the-fly by a firm called Dataherald and include the number of new listings in Putnam and Dutchess counties, the number of home sales and median home sale price.

### Community Directory

This is a continually updated guide to local businesses and cultural sites, with addresses, phone numbers and web links.

### Shop Local Online

We created this during the pandemic; it's a list of local retailers that allow you to order online.

### Job Search

Provided by Indeed, these are continually updated listings for open positions in the Highlands and surrounding areas.

### Podcast Archives

Here are links to all the episodes of our podcast, for easy listening. The three most popular downloads so far have been interviews with a barefoot Ironman competitor; Dinky Romilly of Philipstown, who discussed her civil rights work and her famous mother; and the author of a book about stone walls.

# Putnam Allocates \$1 Million for Flood Repairs

*Legislature moves \$600,000 for ambulance deal; renews sales tax*

By Liz Schevtchuk Armstrong

Putnam legislators agreed unanimously Tuesday (Aug. 1) to provide \$1 million to repair infrastructure damaged by the July storms that flooded roads and left other devastation, particularly in Philipstown.

According to the resolution, an engineering assessment of the devastation continues and county officials expect cleanup costs to

exceed that amount.

In other business, the Legislature approved a transfer of \$600,000 from county interest and earnings accounts to pay fees and obligations under Putnam's contract with Empress Ambulance for county-wide, urgent advanced life support (ALS) medical assistance.

Legislator Nancy Montgomery, who represents Philipstown and part of Putnam Valley and had supported the change in ALS providers, abstained. She could not immediately be reached this week to explain.

When Ambulnz, the previous ALS provider, which took over in January 2022,

recently sought to renegotiate its deal, county officials looked for alternatives and awarded Empress an \$8.3 million, three-year contract that took effect July 16. The EMStar ambulance service, which merged with Empress in 2021, had supplied Putnam's ALS in the past.

Providing \$600,000 upfront has no fiscal impact, Michael Lewis, the finance commissioner, told legislators in a memo. The funds come from such sources as interest rather than taxes.

Along with abstaining from the ambulance vote, Montgomery voted "no" on a renewal of the county's sales tax for 2024 and 2025. (Extending the sales tax struc-

ture is a periodic, usually pro forma, legislative chore.) Putnam has an 8.375 percent sales tax, which combines the county charge with the state take of 4 percent and a 0.375 percent levy paid by counties in the Metropolitan Commuter Transportation District.

"I don't see any point in considering this until we start sharing sales tax with our towns," Montgomery said at the meeting on Tuesday. "We're not getting much for the sales tax we contribute in my district."

Unlike most counties in New York state, Putnam does not return a portion of sales tax to the towns and villages in which it originated. County officials say they provide services, instead.

Visit [highlandscurrent.org](https://highlandscurrent.org) for news updates and latest information.

## Central Hudson (from Page 1)

2021 a three-year plan in which residential customers paid 33 cents less per month for electricity during the first year and increases of \$1.72 and \$1.82 for the final two years.

Gas rates total \$5.31 in increases over the three-year agreement, which ends on June 30, 2024.

Whatever rates are approved would take effect on July 1, 2024. Central Hudson's customers include 5,200 residents and businesses in Cold Spring, Nelsonville and Philipstown and 6,600 in Beacon.

On July 28, the state Department of Public Service (DPS), the administrative arm of the Public Service Commission, announced that Central Hudson had agreed to pay for an independent monitor to "verify" the utility's progress in correcting the sources of its billing mistakes.

According to DPS, the monitor will also "accelerate" Central Hudson's transition from bimonthly to monthly meter readings, beginning with pilot programs later this year and early 2024. The "vast majority" of the utility's customers should be billed based on monthly readings by December 2024, instead of an initial goal of February 2026, said DPS.

In Friday's announcement, DPS said Central Hudson's billing problems have lessened. Just 1 percent of a sample of complaints filed between February and March were for billing mistakes, according to DPS, which said the independent monitor will "verify that these corrective actions are working and will be sustained."

Still, U.S. Rep. Pat Ryan and state Assembly Member Jonathan Jacobson, Democrats whose districts include Beacon, criticized Central Hudson's proposal.

"While the company is now working to fix these issues and rebuild trust, it's absolutely unacceptable to raise costs on our hard-working families until all of their billing issues are fully remedied," said Ryan in a statement.

Revenues from its latest proposed hike, according to Central Hudson, are essential to replace aging transmission and gas lines, connect solar and wind projects to its system and add more personnel and equipment to restore power after outages caused

by extreme storms, which have become more frequent.

Central Hudson said it plans to expand financial-assistance programs for low-income customers and increase its workforce by 20 percent. Although it requested a one-year agreement, the company said that during the state's review it would consider a three-year plan that would allow for lower annual increases.

"By making these necessary investments, we will not only maintain the safety and reliability of our utility operations but also comply with New York State's nation-leading clean energy laws, protect the environ-

ment and improve customer service," said Joe Hally, the company's vice president of regulatory affairs.

Despite those assurances, Central Hudson's proposal will be overshadowed by its efforts to remedy the problems that caused widespread billing problems when the utility switched to a new \$88 million customer-service system in September 2021 and customers began receiving wildly inaccurate bills.

The problems, including programming errors, caused delays in issuing statements that lasted more than three months for some customers and overcharges that affected more than 8,000 customers.

With the system erroneously blocking bills from being sent for prolonged periods, Central Hudson began sending invoices based on estimates, in violation of approved procedures for using them instead of actual meter readings, according to a DPS report.

Jacobson said the utility "needs to get its house in order" before proposing higher rates.

"Central Hudson is mistaken if it expects to be rewarded for nearly two years of untimely and inaccurate billing," he said in a statement. "Customers have suffered enough without the added insult of an unwarranted rate hike."

## HOWLAND CULTURAL CENTER

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**Sat – August 12 – 7 PM**  
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One of the living legends of American music. Said Pete Seeger: "He's one of the most talented musicians in the universe!" (New York Times)  
Tix adv \$35 or \$50 at the door - [howlandculturalcenter.org](https://howlandculturalcenter.org)



**DAVID AMRAM & his Quartet**

Kevin Twigg  
Rene Hart  
Adam Amram  
Adira Amram

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[howlandculturalcenter.org](https://howlandculturalcenter.org)



The Highlands Current is looking for someone to help with coverage of Beacon and Haldane high school sports during the fall, winter and spring seasons.

Ideal candidates will have experience in sports reporting or other forms of journalism. This is a freelance position that will include coverage of one game per week during the fall, winter and spring seasons, as well as roundups of results from other teams. The ability to also photograph live games is a plus.

The fall season includes cross-country, football, boys' and girls' soccer, girls' tennis, girls' swimming and volleyball; the winter season includes basketball, indoor track, boys' swimming and wrestling; and the spring season includes baseball, softball, outdoor track, boys' and girls' lacrosse, golf and unified basketball. There are also sports that are combined with other schools, such as crew and hockey.

The reporter will be paid a fee each week based on the number of games/teams that must be covered. Deadlines are Wednesday night.

Email a resume and writing samples to  
[editor@highlandscurrent.org](mailto:editor@highlandscurrent.org).

The HIGHLANDS  
**Current**

AROUND TOWN



◀ **FARM STORE** — The Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming in Philipstown opened a farm store on July 28, offering organic produce, meat and eggs and pick-your-own flowers, herbs and tomatoes. The store is open from 2 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. See more photos at [highlandscurrent.org](https://highlandscurrent.org).



◀ **WALKWAY REPAIR** — The boardwalk at Madam Brett Park in Beacon has reopened after being closed for a week so the city's Public Works Department could install new, safer railings.

*Photo provided*

◀ **THE PROM** — The Depot Teen Players — including Ashlyn O'Malley and Silvia Hardman, shown here — performed a musical at the Philipstown Depot Theatre in Garrison from July 27 to 30 about four Broadway actors who travel to a conservative Indiana town that banned a lesbian student from attending the prom with her girlfriend. See more photos at [highlandscurrent.org](https://highlandscurrent.org). *Photos by Ross Corsair*

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## The Calendar

## Lost Worlds

*Artists examine two antiques: letters and pay phones*

By Alison Rooney

In a paired solo exhibit — meaning the work of two artists each occupies half of the Garage Gallery in Beacon — painter Fern Apfel and photographer Amy Becker consider the question, “What is lost?” It opens Aug. 12.

The gallery notes, citing the rapid pace of technological change and “the relentless overwriting of the old with the new,” that culture and economy seem to now depend on “discarding what is for what could be.”

The artwork — trompe-l’oeil paintings featuring handwritten letters by Apfel and Becker’s photographs of pay phones altered by time and place — convey an archival nostalgia while also raising complicated questions about loss.

We asked each artist what drew her to the subject matter.

**Fern Apfel:** It seems to me that letter-writing — long exchanges where people used to explain and describe things — is becoming more and more rare. It takes a long time to write a meaningful letter, so most people succumb to the quick exchange of text and social media, etc.

I was first drawn to making paintings of envelopes after seeing a book of photographs [*Emily Dickinson: Gorgeous Nothings*, edited by Marta Werner and Jen Bervin] of the poems Dickinson scribbled on bits of random papers and parts of envelopes. I just thought they were beautiful. I was working on a series of pictures at the time and I found myself morphing into pictures of envelopes.

Working on these, I began to think about communication — what we say to each other, and what we don’t say. The obvious next step was to paint pictures of letters. The work has gone through many stages where I want the envelopes to be anonymous to where I want the specific day and time and the people who wrote the letter identified, so you can actually, if you want to take the time, read the whole letter.

What becomes apparent is how heartfelt these letters are and how much they tell us about the people who wrote them. Our concerns today are sometimes not much different than they were, let’s say, 100 years ago.

I have a letter from the 1800s in which a mother says to her son: “I haven’t seen you in a while; can you come to dinner Sunday night?” That’s not so different from what a mother might text her son these days.

**Amy Becker:** In the mid-90s, I got my first cellphone. That’s when I began to wonder if I would ever use a pay phone again. Which led me to think that as more people had cellphones, we would need far fewer pay phones. A decade later, I noticed pay phones were gradually being abandoned.

Looking at abandoned pay phones kept reminding me of a play I read in high school called *Voice of the Turtle*, by John Van Druten. It’s about a young woman in New York City during World War II. I don’t recall much about the play, except she oddly felt sorry for things, like a radio that nobody was listening to. That personification stuck with me as I observed more and more pay phones becoming neglected.

It was around this time I started to photograph them as environmental portraits. And I decided for this series, titled *Dead Ringers: Portraits of Abandoned Payphones*, to put aside my usual cameras, and instead use my iPhone camera as the means to photograph these remains of the technology it replaced.



“Newark Library,” by Amy Becker



“Ladders,” by Amy Becker



“Phone Prints,” by Amy Becker

communicate most often through texts, emails, social media and yes, phones.

**Apfel:** The world suffers from authentic communication — as we give in to the quick sound bite, or a “shooting from the hip” remark on social media. There is no pause to think about our words and how they affect others — and even if they are true!

What has been the most surprising question asked of you by a young person who has seen your images?

**Apfel:** People assume that my paintings are collaged, that I am simply pasting these old letters to my pictures. Each letter or piece of paper is painted with multiple layers of acrylic paint. I do all the actual writing and fine detail work by hand with archival pens.

**Becker:** One asked, “What’s a collect call?”

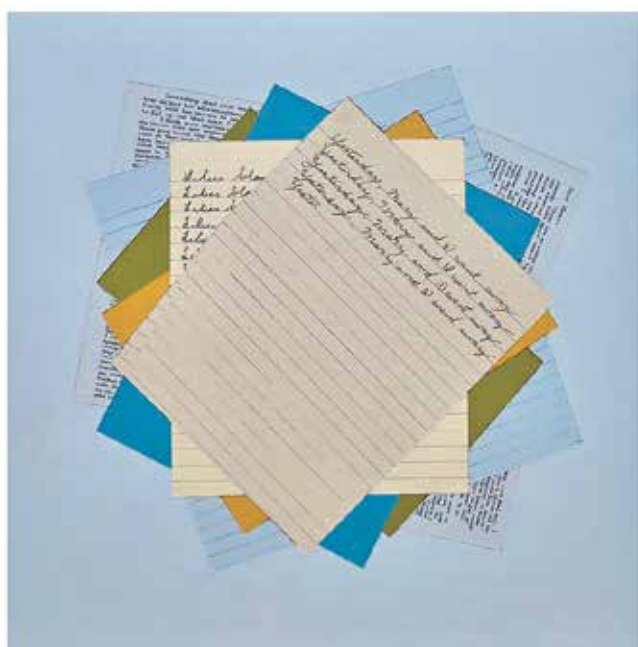
Has the notion of communication become devalued in our always-connected world?

**Becker:** I don’t think communication has become devalued at all. It has evolved and will likely continue to do so. We may not be using handwritten letters and talking on pay phones very much, if at all. Now we

Garage Gallery is located in Beacon on North Elm Street, a half-block off Main. See [garagegallery.com](http://garagegallery.com). The artists have websites at [fernappel.com](http://fernappel.com) and [amybecker.com](http://amybecker.com). The opening reception for *What is Lost?* is scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. on Aug. 12 and the show will continue through Aug. 27.



“Minor Scales,” by Fern Apfel



“Yesterday, Mary and I went away,” by Fern Apfel



“Dear Alta, Lots of Love, Dale,” by Fern Apfel

# THE WEEK AHEAD

Edited by Pamela Doan (calendar@highlandscurrent.org)

For a complete listing of events, see  
highlandscurrent.org/calendar.

## COMMUNITY

SAT 5

### Great Newburgh to Beacon Swim

NEWBURGH

8:30 – 10 a.m. Unico Park  
70 Front St. | riverpool.org

This 19th annual 1-mile swim across the Hudson River ends at the Beacon waterfront. Funds raised support the River Pool in Beacon. Volunteers in kayaks to support the swimmers are needed. Register online. *Cost: \$75 (\$25 ages 10-17), plus minimum \$100 in sponsorship donations*

SAT 5

### Great Hudson River Fish Count

COLD SPRING

9 a.m. Little Stony Point | hrnerr.org

Meet on the beach for this annual count co-sponsored by the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Each summer, organizations along the Hudson River and at New York Harbor collect, count and catalog fish species using seine nets, minnow traps and rods and reels. The fish are then released.

SAT 5

### Putnam County Wine & Food Fest

BREWSTER

11 a.m. – 6 p.m. Wells Park  
98 Oak St. | putnamcountywinefest.com

The 12th annual event will showcase brewers, distilleries and cider makers from New York. There also will be food, live music and children's activities. Also SUN 6. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door, \$10 designated driver, ages 15 and younger free)*

FRI 11

### Blood Drive

BEACON

11:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Beacon Rec Center  
23 W. Center St. | redcrossblood.org

Register for an appointment or walk in to donate.



Great Hudson River Fish Count, Aug. 5

SAT 12

### Modern Makers Market

COLD SPRING

11 a.m. – 5 p.m. St. Mary's Church  
1 Chestnut St. | hopsonthehudson.com

More than 50 artisans and artists will sell their work. There also will be live music and food. Also SUN 13.

SAT 12

### Massacre On Main Street

BEACON

4 – 10 p.m. VFW Hall | 413 Main St.  
facebook.com/beacontoyandcomicshow

Story Screen and the Beacon Toy and Comic Books Show will partner to present a double feature and a vendor event. Watch *Monster Squad* at 6 p.m. and *Phantasm* at 8 p.m. The toy show continues SUN 13. *Cost: \$3 (16 and younger free)*

SUN 13

### Beacon Sloop Corn Festival

BEACON

Noon – 5 p.m. Riverfront Park  
beaconsloopclub.org

Enjoy local sweet corn, lemonade and watermelon. The Offshoots, David Amram, Lydia Adams Davis, the Cabos and other musicians will perform on two solar-powered

stages. Children can make crafts and learn about river life. Donations welcome. *Free*

## VISUAL ARTS

SAT 12

### Janice Caswell | Martha Bone

GARRISON

5 – 7 p.m. Garrison Art Center  
23 Garrison's Landing | 845-424-3960  
garrisonartcenter.org

Caswell's mixed-media exhibition, *Off Kilter*, will be exhibited in the Balter Room and Bone's collaged paintings and assemblage, *Mapping the Invisible*, in the Gillette Gallery. Through Sept. 10.

## KIDS & FAMILY

SAT 5

### Youth Soccer Clinic

COLD SPRING

9 a.m. Haldane Field

Haldane students in grades 3 to 8 are invited. The entry fee is a donation to the Philipstown Food Pantry of cash or a non-perishable food item. The clinic will be followed at 11 a.m. by a friendly game between teams of Haldane soccer alumni.

SAT 5

### Rhonda Appleseed & The Tree that Learned How to Speak

GARRISON

2 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library  
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020  
desmondfishlibrary.org

The Traveling Lantern Theatre Company will perform the story of a girl who follows in the footsteps of her relative, Johnny, to learn from trees what they need.

WED 9

### Pollinator Storytime

BEACON

4 p.m. Howland Public Library  
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134  
beaconlibrary.org

As part of Stony Kill Farm's Butterflies and Blooms Week, children ages 4 to 7 will hear stories about the insects that pollinate flowers.

THURS 10

### Pat Schories and Making Biscuit

COLD SPRING

10:30 a.m. Butterfield Library  
10 Morris Ave. | 845-265-3040  
butterfieldlibrary.org

The illustrator of the Biscuit children's book series will talk about her work. Children ages 4 to 7 can meet puppies and will each receive a book. Registration required.



THURS 10

### Talewise Presents: Save the Earth

BEACON

4 p.m. Howland Public Library  
313 Main St. | 845-831-1134  
beaconlibrary.org

The interactive performance for children ages 4 to 10 will include science experiments as two heroes fight to stop a mastermind polluter. Registration required.

FRI 11

### Summer Reading Finale

GARRISON

3 – 5 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library  
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020  
desmondfishlibrary.org

Celebrate your summer book list with ice cream from Homestyle Creamery and visit with the animals from the Two By Two Animal Haven. Registration encouraged.

SAT 12

### Campfire Sing-A-Long

WAPPINGERS FALLS

5 p.m. Common Ground Farm  
79 Farmstead Lane  
commongroundfarm.org

Join Compass Arts, Common Ground and the Beacon Rising choir for harmonizing. Bring a picnic dinner. *Cost: \$10 to \$15 (\$25 to \$50 group)*

## TALKS & TOURS

SAT 5

### For the Birds: Ecologically Attuned Writing

GARRISON

10 a.m. Constitution Marsh  
127 Warren Landing  
constitutionmarsh.audubon.org

Poet Mary Newell will present a workshop on how to draft a piece of writing from your field notes and observations at the marsh. Registration required.

SAT 5

### Civilian Conservation Corps Explained

PEEKSKILL

2 p.m. Lincoln Depot Museum  
10 S. Water St. | lincolndepotmuseum.org

Kevin Oldenburg, a ranger with the National Park Service who works at historic sites in Hyde Park, will discuss one of the most popular New Deal programs during The Great Depression. *Cost: \$10 (members free)*

SUN 6

### Permaculture Principles in Action

BEACON

11 a.m. One Nature  
845-440-1167 | onenaturellc.com

Jesse Stacken will host a garden tour demonstrating how he has designed a sustainable and supportive ecosystem to grow food, support pollinators, raise chickens



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and use natural resources through permaculture. The tour address will be provided upon registration. *Cost: \$25*

THURS 10  
**Earring-Making Workshop**  
GARRISON

6 p.m. Desmond-Fish Library  
472 Route 403 | 845-424-3020  
[desmondfishlibrary.org](http://desmondfishlibrary.org)  
In this all-ages workshop, Joan Lloyd will explain how to design and create earrings. Bring any broken earrings or pairs that you no longer want; materials are provided. Registration required.

SUN 13  
**Butterflies and Blooms**  
WAPPINGERS FALLS

10 a.m., 11 a.m. & 8 p.m. Stony Kill Farm  
79 Farmstead Lane | [stonykill.org](http://stonykill.org)  
As part of its annual festival, which continues through Aug. 19, Stony Kill will offer a honeybee hive tour, pollinator plant walk, after-dark moth walk, art, music and crafts. See website for details. Most activities are \$5.

SUN 13  
**Great Estates Garden Tours**  
BEACON

11 a.m. & 1 p.m. Mount Gulian  
145 Sterling St. | [mountgulian.org](http://mountgulian.org)  
Learn about the grounds owned by the Verplanck family and their master gardener, James Brown, an escaped slave and one of the first Black people to own property in what is now Beacon. Reservations

suggested. *Cost: \$12 (\$10 seniors, \$6 ages 6 to 18, free ages 6 and younger)*

STAGE & SCREEN  
SAT 5  
**Love's Labor's Lost**  
GARRISON

7:30 p.m. Hudson Valley Shakespeare  
2015 Route 9 | 845-265-9575  
[hvshakespeare.org](http://hvshakespeare.org)  
Amanda Dehnert directs this production as four young men try to uphold their commitment to their studies and not be tempted by the arrival of four women. Also MON 7, WED 9, FRI 11, SAT 12, SUN 13. Through Aug. 27. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*

SAT 5  
**It Happened One Night**  
COLD SPRING

8:30 p.m. Dockside Park  
[coldspringfilm.org](http://coldspringfilm.org)  
The Cold Spring Film Society will screen Frank Capra's 1934 film starring Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert as a reporter and an heiress who get thrown together. *Free*

SUN 6  
**Henry V**  
GARRISON

7:30 p.m. Hudson Valley Shakespeare  
2015 Route 9 | 845-265-9575  
[hvshakespeare.org](http://hvshakespeare.org)  
HVSF presents the epic tale of King Henry and his war to seize the French crown. Emily Ota plays the lead. Also THURS 10. Through Aug. 21. *Cost: \$10 to \$100*



Love's Labor's Lost, Aug. 5

THURS 10  
**Star Wars**  
BEACON

8:30 p.m. Memorial Park  
198 Robert Cahill Drive  
[beaconny.myrec.com](http://beaconny.myrec.com)  
The 1977 film that introduced the epic story of the battle against the Empire by the Rebel Alliance will begin at dusk. *Free*

FRI 11  
**The Princess Bride**  
BEACON

6:30 & 7:30 p.m. Boats leave dock  
845-831-6346 | [bannermancastle.org](http://bannermancastle.org)  
Bannerman Island will screen the 1987 film about never giving up on true love. *Cost: \$40*

SAT 12  
**Paula Poundstone**  
PEEKSKILL

8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039  
[paramounthudsonvalley.com](http://paramounthudsonvalley.com)  
The comedian, author and podcast host (*Nobody Listens to Paula Poundstone*) will perform stand-up. *Cost: \$37 to \$55*

SAT 12  
**My Garden of 1,000 Bees**  
WAPPINGERS FALLS

8:30 p.m. Stony Kill Farm  
79 Farmstead Lane | [stonykill.org](http://stonykill.org)  
As part of its Butterflies and Blooms Week, the farm will screen a PBS documentary by a wildlife filmmaker who focused his lens

on the bees in his yard during the lockdown. *Free*

SUN 13  
**Stacey Z Lawrence**  
PUTNAM VALLEY

3 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center  
729 Peekskill Hollow Road  
[tompkinscorners.org](http://tompkinscorners.org)  
The poet will read from her collection, *Fall Risk*, followed by an open mic. *Cost: \$10*

SECOND SATURDAY

SAT 12  
**Andre Junget**  
BEACON

4 – 6 p.m. Bannerman Island Gallery  
150 Main St. | 845-831-6346  
[bannermancastle.org](http://bannermancastle.org)  
The gallery will display work by the illustrator of *Bannerman Island, Recollections from a Time Gone By*, and the artist will sign copies of the book.

SAT 12  
**What is Lost?**  
BEACON

4 – 7 p.m. Garage Gallery  
17 Church St. | [garagegallery.com](http://garagegallery.com)  
Fern Apfel's paintings are of handwritten letters while Amy Becker's photos of pay phones evoke evolving connections. See Page 9. Through Aug. 27.

(Continued on Page 12)



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THE WEEK AHEAD

(Continued from Page 11)

**SAT 12**  
**The Big Blonk Show | Dingy Dave**  
**BEACON**  
5 – 9 p.m. Clutter Gallery  
139 Main St. | clutter.co  
The group show will feature multiples and figures. Through Sept. 1.

**SAT 12**  
**Up Close**  
**BEACON**  
5 – 8 p.m. Hudson Beach Glass  
162 Main St. | hudsonbeachglass.com  
Tanja Bos' works on paper and Linda Pratt's collage and postage stamps will be on view through Sept. 4.

**SAT 12**  
**Respire**  
**BEACON**  
6 – 8 p.m. BAU Gallery  
506 Main St. | baugallery.org  
This juried group show will be on view through Sept. 3.

**SAT 12**  
**Small Works by Strangers**  
**BEACON**  
6 – 9 p.m. Super Secret Projects  
484 Main St. | supersecretprojects.com  
The show is a juried group exhibit.

**SAT 12**  
**Subverting Reality**  
**BEACON**  
7 – 9:30 p.m. Distortion Society  
172 Main St. | distortionsociety.com  
The collaborative group show will feature artists from Super Secret Projects.

MUSIC

**SAT 5**  
**Summer Night Soundtracks**  
**BEACON**  
7 p.m. The Yard | 4 Hanna Lane  
annalyseandryan.com/  
summer-night-soundtracks  
The Costellos, Annalyse and Ryan, Joe Abba, Cary Brown and other local musicians will perform songs from *The Big Lebowski*. *Cost: \$25 to \$35*

*\$33 or \$53 (ages 12 and younger free)*

**SAT 5**  
**Kieran Kane and Rayna Gellert**  
**PUTNAM VALLEY**  
7:30 p.m.  
Tompkins Corners Cultural Center  
729 Peekskill Hollow Road  
tompkinscorners.org  
The singers and songwriters will play music from their latest release, *The Flowers that Bloom in Spring*. *Cost: \$20*

**SAT 5**  
**Yacht Rock Gold**  
**PEEKSKILL**  
8 p.m. Paramount Hudson Valley  
1008 Brown St. | 914-739-0039  
paramounthudsonvalley.com  
The cover band performs hits from the late 1970s and early '80s. *Cost: \$25 to \$35*



Old Blind Dogs, Aug. 10

**SAT 5**  
**Bob Baldwin**  
**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com  
The contemporary jazz pianist and composer will play songs from his latest release, *The UrbanSmooth Suite*. *Cost: \$30 (\$35 door)*

**THURS 10**  
**Old Blind Dogs**  
**BEACON**  
7 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com  
The Scottish folk band is celebrating its 25th anniversary. *Cost: \$30 (\$35 door)*

**FRI 11**  
**Professor Louie and the Crowmatix**  
**PUTNAM VALLEY**  
6 p.m. Tompkins Corners Cultural Center  
729 Peekskill Hollow Road  
tompkinscorners.org  
In this rescheduled show, the blues all-star group will play music from its latest release, *Strike Up the Band*. *Cost: \$20*

**FRI 11**  
**Gina Coleman and Misty Blues**  
**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com  
For their Queens of the Blues show, the group will pay tribute to Bessie Smith, Ruth Brown, Koko

Taylor and Big Mama Thornton. *Cost: \$25 (\$30 door)*

**SAT 12**  
**David Amram**  
**BEACON**  
7 p.m. Howland Cultural Center  
477 Main St. | howlandculturalcenter.org  
In a benefit for the cultural center, the multi-instrumental composer of jazz and classical music will perform with Kevin Twigg, Rene Hart, Adam Amram and Adira Amram. *Cost: \$35*

**SAT 12**  
**Peter Yarrow**  
**BEACON**  
8:30 p.m. Towne Crier | 379 Main St.  
845-855-1300 | townecrier.com  
The folk singer and songwriter is best known for his work with Paul Stookey and Mary Travers as Peter, Paul and Mary. *Cost: \$45 (\$50 door)*

CIVIC

**MON 7**  
**City Council**  
**BEACON**  
7 p.m. City Hall | 1 Municipal Plaza  
845-838-5011 | beaconnny.gov

**WED 9**  
**Village Board**  
**COLD SPRING**  
7 p.m. Village Hall | 85 Main St.  
845-265-3611 | coldspringny.gov



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Hummingbird in flight 8" x 8"  
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www.hudsonbeachglass.com

## The Artist Next Door

## Deborah Needleman

By Mackenzie Boric

It's not every day that a top New York City journalist leaves her career to become a basket weaver. But that's the path taken by Garrison artist Deborah Needleman.

"It was a pretty giant transition, but I was ready for it," she says. She knew the time was right for a change when she realized she wanted to stay in her weekend home in Garrison rather than return to the city, and to put her time to a different use.

Needleman began her journalism career as a garden writer for *The New York Times*, *Slate* and *House & Garden*, and finished it covering arts and culture. She says she enjoyed writing about people she found fascinating and sharing their stories with a wide audience.

But it was while working at *T: The New York Times Style Magazine* (where she was editor-in-chief from 2012 to 2016) that a seed was planted. While researching a story, Needleman watched a video of a woman in Sussex, England, weaving a basket and knew she would soon have a new hobby. It eventually became more, prompting the reassessment of how she spent her days.

As an artist, "this idea of having to make up my day, every single day, was like: 'Oh my God, what do I do today?'" she recalls. "It's incredible freedom, but it was daunting. It's 100 percent up to me. And that's satisfying. And also overwhelming."

Needleman turned a shed full of junk into a studio for basket weaving and other crafts. "I'm into making useful things rather than sculptures," she says. "So I make lots of wastepaper baskets and plant holders. I also make birdcages, which are not useful, but they are cool."

Needleman has experimented with plants and grasses for her baskets but has settled on willow (for harder baskets) and rush (for softer ones).

She has been growing willow in her garden for two years to supplement what she buys from farmers. "In the winter, when the leaves fall off, and before the sap rises, you cut it and each year when you cut it more



Deborah Needleman in her Garrison studio

Photo by M. Boric



A bread basket

shoots up," she says. "But I need a bigger place to grow. I only have 10 varieties here."

She soaks the plant for a day or two before testing its bend to see if it's ready to use. The willow soaking in the tub in her studio was ready.

"I just learned how to do square work, which is different from making a round basket," she says. "So, I have a ton to learn. Every time I see a beautiful basket I'm like: 'I want to make that.'"

Needleman says basket weaving has



A flower basket

Photos by Brett Wood

helped her connect to other weavers and gives her a sense of contentment.

"Craft is a lot about repetition, and you're making the same movement over and over again, and there's something deeply pleasing about that," she says. "I don't know why, but people often say, 'Oh, it must be so therapeutic,' and I think, 'Yes, but it's also frustrating, challenging and tiring.'"

It sounds kind of crazy, but I do feel connected to all the other weavers throughout history," she says. "It's like: 'I'm doing



Needleman at work on a basket

Photo by Sarah Ryhanen

this thing that people have done forever."

"This year is the first year that I'm not doing anything but this," she adds. After years of being away from the daily grind, Needleman says she has no desire to return. "I can't imagine being in an office now."

"Politics and culture are so divisive, and what interests me are the things that we as humans share, and things that connect us," she says. "That's basket weaving. It makes me aware of all the things that join us as people."

*A selection of Needleman's baskets is available at [gardenheir.com](http://gardenheir.com) for \$168 to \$498, along with her limited-edition garden tea.*

## NOTICE

The Philipstown Planning Board will not meet in the month of August. The next meeting will be September 21st, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516.



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Daniel Kelly improvised on the family's new grand piano earlier this year.



The Lake Trio played in Sandy McKelvey's house in 2022.



An evening of choro in the summer of 2022 featured Cesar Garabini (guitar) and Dominique Gagne (flute).

## Choro Das 3 is in the House

*Brazilian trio will perform at Cold Spring home*

By Alison Rooney

After a hiatus, Sandy McKelvey will again host a concert in the backyard of her Cold Spring home on Aug. 17, this time with Choro Das 3, a Brazilian group comprised of three sisters that is touring the U.S.

McKelvey became acquainted with the term “house concert” while living in New York City. A roommate organized a prototype, which McKelvey describes as “a classical music concert held in a wealthy person’s home, usually accompanied by food and wine, with time built in for people to socialize.”

“I never considered doing it for myself,” she says.

In 2018, McKelvey noticed a Facebook post by Jill Sobule, a singer-songwriter she admired, noting that Sobule did house concerts in between her larger gigs. McKelvey got in touch, proposing a concert, despite a complete lack of experience in hosting.

She compiled an email list of everyone she knew in Cold Spring and invited them. “We got a big crowd [30 people] and I made new friendships,” McKelvey says.

Audience members were asked to

contribute food or beverages for a potluck, and 100 percent of the cover charge went to the musician. McKelvey thought she might like to host another musician but the pandemic put that idea on hold.

When restrictions eased, she organized her second and third concerts soon after attending a Brazilian music camp for adults at Smith College in Massachusetts. Most of the other campers were professionals. Inspired by what she was hearing, she began to ask, “Would you play at my house?”

In one concert in the summer of 2022 on McKelvey’s back porch, Cesar Garabini (Brazilian 7-string guitar) and Dominique Gagne (flute) performed an evening of choro (pronounced “shoro”), which the host describes as “the foundation of all modern Brazilian music, including samba, bossa nova, Brazilian jazz and pop. Almost all music that is part of Brazilian culture came from choro. It was developed in the late 19th century, blending classical traditions with African rhythms, blending different cultures, in an urban environment.”

In another concert, The Lake Trio (Kerry Linder on vocals and percussion, Martin Pizzarelli on bass and Mark Sganga on guitar) performed bossa nova.

McKelvey’s fourth concert, this past spring, featured Cold Spring composer



Choro Das 3

Daniel Kelly. “My family had just gotten a used Yamaha grand piano, so he performed improvisations in the living room, which holds about 20 people — the backyard holds around 50,” she says. “It made me so happy. There’s so much negative and scary going on in the world and hearing music in my house brings in beauty, community, friendships.”

Choro Das 3 is a trio formed by sisters Corina (flute), Lia (7-string guitar) and Elisa (mandolin, clarinet, banjo, accordion and piano). The sisters, from São Paulo, have released 11 albums and have been touring North America, Europe and Brazil for the past 21 years. The house concert is part of their first U.S. tour since 2019.

What’s next on the schedule? “I don’t have a plan,” McKelvey says. “I’d like this to become a series with a few concerts every spring and summer. I’d love to see this at other people’s homes, in a way we could all



Jill Sobule performed in McKelvey's backyard in 2018.

*Photos provided*

share in the promotion of the event, and make it a community thing. I’m personally interested in a lot of Brazilian styles, but the intention is not just to do Brazilian music.”

Ideally, “these concerts should be kind of spontaneous and serendipitous,” she adds. “It makes it more fun that way. House concerts are social. You get to meet the musicians, chat with your neighbors and make friends. All this while sipping wine and enjoying the delicious food people bring to share.”

*Choro Das 3 will perform at 6 p.m. on Aug. 17 at 10 Whitehill Place in Cold Spring. (In the event of rain, the performance will move inside.) Tickets are \$25 and reservations are advised. Payments can be sent by Venmo to Sandy-McKelvey. Call 917-498-6262 with questions. Bring a dish to share or wine, beer or a non-alcoholic beverage.*

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**MODERN MAKERS MARKET** —Artisans, artists, food, live music, ice cream and Thai tea are coming to Cold Spring Aug. 12 and 13, from 11 to 5 p.m. Free admission and free raffle. For more information and to see who is exhibiting go to [www.HopsontheHudson.com](http://www.HopsontheHudson.com). Handcrafted, One of a Kind and Small Bath. Come and Shop Local! Come by train and take a short, four-block walk to the market. Parking can be found on all side streets in the village. Woodworkers, potters, craft beverages and so much more. St. Mary’s is the place!

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Mouths to Feed

Green Envy

By Celia Barbour

“That’s not fair!” said George, my oldest. He was 4 then, and the injustice prompting his outcry was the arrival of two small cups of orange juice at the breakfast table, one for him and one for his younger brother, Henry. The problem was not that Henry’s cup contained more juice — God forbid I should make that mistake twice. I had mastered the art of doling out their servings with utmost precision, crouching eye level as I filled their cups. No, this morning’s crime was that I had set Henry’s on the table a moment before George’s.

His outburst made me laugh. Then, as the morning wore on, it made me puzzled — at the sheer impossibility of trying to parent fairly. When something as scientifically quantifiable as volume doesn’t cut it, what can a parent do?

The answer, of course, was to shift my own approach to fairness — away from a principle of how I should treat my kids (where fair=equal=interchangeable), toward an effort to be equally present with each of them, however they wanted and needed. It meant switching my brain onto a more curious and open-minded track — from a top-down attitude to an outside-in one.

In the 20 years since then, fairness never stopped mattering in our family, although the ways it mattered changed radically as we grew.

It turns out that fairness is written into our deepest animal instincts. Twenty years ago, Frans de Waal and Sarah Brosnan published a study in *Science*, one of the world’s leading academic journals. In their lab, capuchin monkeys were rewarded with pieces of cucumber for handing a researcher a pebble. Capuchins love fresh vegetables, so they delighted in the exchange.

Then the researchers began rewarding one monkey with a grape, while her neighbor still got the cucumber. Suddenly, the second monkey didn’t want her reward, and would even sometimes throw it back at the researcher. And when some monkeys were offered grapes



Cucumber-Grape Gazpacho

Note: You can substitute any green, leafy vegetable for the spinach (I’ve used beet greens, chard and baby kale). And you can substitute full-size cucumbers for the minis; simply peel and de-seed them before using. You can also vary the quantities of all the ingredients to suit your preferences and palate.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 yellow pepper, seeded and roughly chopped  | 6 cups spinach (see note)                |
| 2 to 3 celery stalks, roughly chopped        | 1 cup basil leaves                       |
| ½ to 2 jalapenos, to taste                   | ¼ cup sherry vinegar                     |
| 6 mini cucumbers (about 1½ pounds); see note | ½ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling |
| 1 cup green grapes                           | 2 cups water                             |
| 3 cloves garlic                              | 1 cup ice cubes                          |
| 1½ cups almonds or walnuts, lightly toasted  | Salt and pepper to taste                 |
|  | Greek yogurt for serving, optional       |

Put all the ingredients except the ice cubes in a blender and pulverize until smooth. Add half the ice and puree again. Taste for flavor, adding more vinegar, salt and pepper as needed. Serve with an ice cube and a drizzle of olive oil, if desired.

for doing nothing at all, tantrums ensued. Economists cite this study when discussing questions of fair pay. To them, it demonstrates that disparate pay leads to dissatisfaction and conflict in the workplace. To sociologists and evolutionary biologists, meanwhile, the study reveals that human beings did not invent notions of fairness and justice.

To me, it also points out the power of fairness to color even simple, day-to-day experiences. The flavor of the cucumber didn’t change from the first part of the experiment to the second, but how good it tasted changed dramatically.

One morning not long ago, I appeared to be meditating in my study. Suddenly, my brain came online and began to chide me for treating whole swaths of my life like those cucumbers. Days went by, even weeks, when I was submerged in nothing but cucumbers.

Do we all do this? If our body isn’t perfect, do we love it or resent it? If our career, marriage, house, garden, car or lucky breaks aren’t as grapey as someone else’s, do we walk around filled with appreciation or discontent? Try as I might to count my blessings, I had to admit that my perception often resembled that of a pissed-off capuchin. And even when I don’t

measure my gifts against another person’s, I have a tendency to compare my life to how I thought it was “supposed to” turn out. Oh sigh, I thought as I sat there with my eyes closed, impersonating a meditator. Maybe it’s time I learned how to love cucumbers again, as well as grapes. And while I’m at it, what if I tried loving them together? Like, in a cold

soup! I stretched my legs, headed into the kitchen and whipped up this gazpacho. I’ve kept a jar of it in the refrigerator on and off ever since. It happily welcomes all kinds of vegetables, even — especially — cucumbers. And George and Henry love it when I place cups of this soup in front of them, even if I don’t set them down simultaneously.

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## Roots and Shoots

## Consider the Trees

By Pamela Doan

There are ways to benefit from trees in any size yard. Aside from providing shade and summer cooling to reducing utility costs from running air conditioners, trees clean the air, soak up stormwater with their roots and provide all sorts of ecological benefits (depending on the tree) to wildlife, birds and insects. Additionally, studies show that simply looking at trees in your yard can be a stress reliever.

While size is relative, considering the mature height of a tree or woody plant when planting it near paths, structures or recreation areas is key to minimizing risk. Our warmer winters are bringing in wet, heavy snow that puts too much weight on branches, leading to broken limbs or uprooting. Careful placement and the right species can reduce that damage.

I've thought a lot about which trees have more resilience against the changing conditions and the extreme storms that are occurring. Here are some suggestions for native species.

**Eastern redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*)

This spring-blooming understory tree tops



out at 20 to 30 feet. Plant it in full sun to part shade in soil with medium moisture levels. It has bright pink flowers in April and May that pop against its dark bark. It's an important nectar source for honeybees and native bees that don't have a lot of options in early spring. The heart-shaped leaves are easy to identify. There are many cultivars of redbud but the straight species is so lovely, there is no reason to choose different leaf colors, etc.

**Dogwoods** (flowering, gray and red twig)

Smaller trees in the *Cornus* genera — flowering dogwood is *Cornus florida*, gray dogwood is *Cornus racemosa* and red twig dogwood is *Cornus sericea*, to name a few — can suit many sites. Flowering dogwood is already a popular yard tree known for its long-blooming range later in spring. While many flowering dogwoods are shorter, it can grow up to 40 feet and is quite majestic.

Gray dogwood is an excellent choice for shadier sites and has delicate white flowers.

Red twig dogwood looks beautiful when grouped or on its own. This is the shortest of the three and has a multi-stemmed shrub form topping out at 10 feet. It's a great choice for all seasons — with white umbel flowers in summer and bright fall color — and the red bark is a nice contrast in snow.

**Witchhazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

If you've noticed a flowering tree in the forest during a late fall or winter hike, it is probably witchhazel. Its small, yellow flowers stand out among the bare branches



A shadbush blooms in the school garden at Haldane in Cold Spring. Photo by P. Doan

around it. It is typically multi-stemmed, growing 10 to 20 feet tall and wide, in part-to full-sun conditions. Many wildlife, birds and pollinators use it.

**Black willow** (*Salix nigra*) or **Pussy willow** (*Salix discolor*)

For areas that have wetter soil, consider one of the native willows. These fast-growing trees will accept moderate to heavy moisture in soils. Black willow can top out at 30 to 60 feet in the right setting and pussy willow stays smaller, under 20 feet. Both can be pruned for smaller spaces but why bother

with maintenance, just give them space. Native willows are huge sources of food for birds because of all the insects that use them. If bird-watching is on your bucket list, then add a few willows and oaks to your yard.

**Bladdernut** (*Staphylea trifolia*)

For a shadier spot, consider American bladdernut. This fast-growing tree is not picky about soil and moisture conditions. It can look more like a shrub with a bushy form and top out at 10 to 15 feet or grow up to 25 feet. After it flowers in the spring, it forms seedpods which dry out and cling to the branches as an interesting feature.

**Juneberry** (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) and **shadbush** (*Amelanchier genera*)

This is one of my favorite Latin names to pronounce — *am-eh-lank-ear* — and each of these options has its unique glories. Juneberry can grow up to 30 feet but is usually shorter. Its berries can be enjoyed by both people and wildlife. Shadbush or shadblow (*Amelanchier arborea*) gets its common name because its white flowers in early spring coincide with the timing of the run of shad fish upstream to spawn. While both species have declined, consider this for a site with afternoon shade and enjoy the berries or leave them for the birds and let it reach its full size of 15 to 25 feet.

September and October are excellent times to plant trees. Cooler temperatures lead to less transplant shock and watering can wind down after dormancy.

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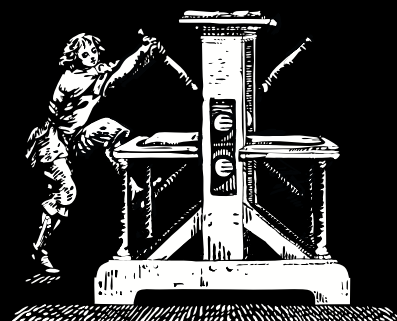


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Post Office *(from Page 1)*

scheduled to begin there for Fishkill in February 2024.

Changes in Cold Spring and Garrison have not been mentioned in any of the USPS plans released so far. Cold Spring carriers drive to Mohegan Lake to sort and pick up mail, although retail operations continue in the village.

The USPS says customers will see no changes to post office retail operations in Beacon. No post offices will close and post office box service will not change, it says. Kayla Weise, the postmaster in Beacon, said

66¢

Price of first-class stamp, after 3-cent increase on July 9

Tuesday that she could not comment.

The Sept. 9 changes will affect 115 local routes in the Mid-Hudson region, according to Steve Hutkins, a retired English professor in Rhinecliff who runs a national website called Save the Post Office and tracks the information released by the USPS. He said that because the average carrier route is 21 miles, and the average drive to a Sorting & Delivery Center is about 10 miles each way, the change will effectively double the length of routes.

“When tens of thousands of routes are relocated, it will add hundreds of millions of miles to the delivery network and essentially cancel out the environmental benefits of 65,000 new electric delivery trucks, paid for mostly by taxpayers,” Hutkins wrote on July 31.

The USPS says the changes are necessary to secure its financial future. The service, which is funded entirely by postage and fees, lost \$2.5 billion in the first quarter of 2023, on operating revenue of \$19.3 billion. Price hikes and reforms have reduced its potential losses over the next 10 years from \$160 billion to \$70 billion, according to Louis DeJoy, the U.S. postmaster general, but mail volume is expected to fall by 36 percent by 2030.

The lack of information about the reforms hasn’t sat well with elected officials in the Highlands. Rep. Pat Ryan, a Democrat whose district includes Beacon, sent a letter in June to DeJoy, asking him to reconsider the plan to consolidate — a change that Ryan said Highlands residents “emphatically oppose.”

“Mail carriers from my district are particularly concerned about the delays to service, added hours in commute time and the destabilizing effects this plan will have,” Ryan wrote, noting that, despite the agency’s claims, “we must reassure the public that they can trust their local post office will stay fully staffed and open for years to come.”

State Sen. Rob Rolison, a Republican whose district includes Beacon, and Michelle Hinchey, a Democrat who represents Columbia and Greene counties, Northern Dutchess and parts of Ulster

County, sent DeJoy a similar letter last month challenging what they called a lack of transparency regarding savings the plan is supposed to generate.

“With fewer facilities and less staff, rural families will suffer,” the senators wrote. “Longer lines at remaining post offices, overworked staff and people who will need to travel farther for services is a burden that our residents, especially seniors, should not bear. We believe a study must be done first to determine what, if any, savings will occur and what services would be lost as a result.”

The heads of local postal unions concurred. Joe DeStefano, the president of the branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers that represents employees in eight Hudson Valley counties, said this week that Beacon postal carriers are concerned about driving 30-year-old delivery trucks, which are manufactured not to exceed 40 mph, across the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge every day.

“That is not a safe speed to be driving on [Interstate] 84,” DeStefano argued. “If I’m doing 60 mph between Newburgh and Beacon, I’ve got tractor trailers blowing past me.”

He and Diana Cline, the president of the Mid-Hudson chapter of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), which represents retail employees, each said they are concerned that customer service will suffer. Although the retail employees’ union contract, which expires in September 2024, includes a no-layoffs clause, Cline said that senior, full-time employees will be “excessed” after the sorting switchover and offered positions at one of nine post offices within a 50-mile radius.

The Beacon post office, which has typically employed four full-time retail clerks plus a part-timer, is scheduled to be downsized to one full-time and one part-time clerk, she said. DeStefano called the Beacon location “one of the very quiet post offices” with few customer complaints, but Cline predicted that “new, non-career people” who are unfamiliar with the community would take the jobs as senior employees are phased out.

“They want to make this miserable for the [senior] people so they will retire rather than move,” she alleged. “It’s going to be clerks working without breaks or all day alone, and that is not what is supposed to happen.”

While Cline has been told that packages will be sorted by machine at the consolidated centers, “flats” such as periodicals and legal-sized envelopes will be sorted manually, but not necessarily by the carrier responsible for delivering them.

The Beacon post office usually receives between 40 and 100 inches of flats daily, she said.

Cline also questioned whether the Postal Service would have trouble attracting applicants for retail positions. The part-time position in Beacon has been vacant since March, she said.

Earlier this year, postal workers marched in front of congressional offices nationwide in protest of what the APWU called severe staffing shortages. The union’s president, Mark Dimondstein, attributed the shortage to poor treatment and training of new hires, resulting in high turnover.



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## OBITUARIES

**Elsie Benton (1934-2023)**

Margaret "Elsie" Benton, 89, of Pasadena, California, who with her husband John co-founded the Walter Hoving Home in Garrison, died July 7.



She was born May 15, 1934. For nearly 50 years, as Assemblies of God ministers, the Bentons visited with women on the streets of New York City and Los Angeles to offer them a way to escape drug and alcohol addiction and prostitution.

The Bentons founded their Christian recovery center in Garrison on June 21, 1967. At the time it opened, the home had 12 residents and four staff members. The couple, who had known each other since kindergarten, was known as "Dad B" and "Mom B" to residents. They were married for 65 years until John's death in 2017.

Before moving to Garrison, the Bentons were pastors at a church in Washington state, directors for Youth for Christ and missionaries in Japan. In 1965 they were asked by David Wilkerson, the founder of Times Square Church best known for his book, *The Cross and the Switchblade*, to join his Teen Challenge ministry.

At the same time, the Bentons began to search for a place outside the city to establish their own recovery home. In March 1967, they met Walter Hoving, the former longtime chairman of Tiffany & Co., and his wife, Pauline, at a dinner party. Hoving helped secure funding for the couple to buy,

for \$175,000, a 22.5-acre property and home on Snake Hill Road in Garrison.

In 1984, the Bentons expanded the ministry to California, opening a home in Pasadena. In 2006 they added a third home in Las Vegas and in 2017 a fourth in Oxford, New Jersey. The Bentons relocated to Pasadena following the opening of the home there but kept a residence at the home in Garrison until 2016 and for many years visited several times each month.

Elsie is survived by her children, Marjii Smith (David), Connie Adams and Jim Benton (Judy), as well as her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life scheduled for Aug. 12 in Pasadena will be livestreamed. Memorial donations may be made to the Hoving Home ([hovinghome.org](http://hovinghome.org)).

**Jody Satriani (1952-2023)**

Jody Louise Satriani, 70, died July 9 at her home of pancreatic cancer.



She was born July 21, 1952, at Butterfield Hospital in Cold Spring, the daughter of Philip and Rose (Shaw) Jackson. She attended Glenham School and Beacon High School and graduated from SUNY Morrisville and York College as a pediatric occupational therapist.

Growing up in "the big house in the Junction," Jody was surrounded by a multi-generational extended family. In addition to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins,

Jody's parents shared their home to many others in their time of need.

Jody's love of art, music and theater was rooted in her family's appreciation for artistic expression. As a child, she saw that art was life (and vice versa), her family said. Her mother was a prolific painter, her father loved art and music, and her uncle Ronnie was a virtuoso at the piano.

Jody began performing at a young age in school productions, at Boscobel in Garrison and the Cecilwood Theater. Jody was an ongoing improvisational actor with Hudson River Playback Theater and involved as a board member and performer in productions with the Performing Arts of Woodstock and The Center for Performing Arts at Rhinebeck.

A memorial will be held Aug. 20 at the Tidewater Center in Saugerties.

**Mark Trifilo (1962-2023)**

Mark T. Trifilo, 60, of Livingston Manor, and formerly of Beacon, died July 15 following complications from cardiac arrest.

He was born Dec. 18, 1962, the son of Eugene and Sandra (Murphy) Trifilo. He attended St. John Elementary School and Beacon High School. For many years, he owned and operated an independent trucking company.

Mark was a motorcycle enthusiast and outdoorsman who enjoyed fishing, hunting, camping, metal-detecting and agriculture. Mark loved horseracing and for some time worked at the Monticello Raceway.

On July 15, 2000, he married Lee Ann Hinkley at St. John the Evangelist Church

in Beacon.

Along with his wife and father, Mark is survived by his children, Melissa Trifilo, Marc Trifilo and Nakita Trifilo; and his siblings, Eugene Trifilo and Staci Trifilo.

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered July 21 at St. John the Evangelist. Memorial donations may be made to the family.

**Other Recent Deaths**

*Beacon*

Mary Boniello, 85     Jill Gilbert, 62  
Carol Gavin, 80

For more obituaries,  
[see highlandscurrent.org/obits](http://highlandscurrent.org/obits).

**NOTICE**

The Philipstown Zoning Board of Appeals will not meet in the Month of August. The next meeting will be September 11th, 2023 at 7:30 p.m. at the Philipstown Town Hall, 238 Main St., Cold Spring, NY 10516

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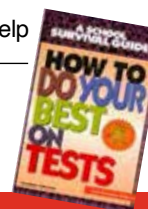
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Puzzles

CROSSCURRENT

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11
12						13				14		
15						16			17			
		18				19				20		
21	22			23				24				
25			26		27		28					
29				30			31			32	33	34
			35			36			37			
38	39	40				41		42		43		
44					45				46			
47				48				49			50	51
52				53				54				
55				56				57				

- ACROSS
1. Breath fresheners
6. Jazzy style
9. Monk’s title
12. Pub perch
13. Greek H
14. Yank’s foe
15. Very beginning
16. Difficult
18. Imam’s place
20. Conks out
21. Fluffy scarf
23. Drone
24. Leans
25. Has
27. Monastery VIP
29. Past
31. Restitution
35. Travel papers
37. Nickelodeon’s *Explorer*
38. Tack on
41. Dogpatch adjective
43. Recipe abbr.

44. Adhesive
45. Roman orator
47. “That’s a lie!”
49. Jets and Sharks
52. Swelled head
53. Samovar
54. Full-length
55. Tax form ID
56. Mag. staff
57. Devoutness
11. Void
17. Redacted
19. Campus areas
21. Short ’do
22. Have debts
24. Male turkey
26. Part of USSR
28. No-frills
30. Kibosh
32. Never
33. Hosp. workers
34. Enervate
36. Extraterrestrials
38. De Mille of dance
39. Whips
40. Japanese bedroll
42. Advantage
45. It gets in the whey
46. Hindu royal
48. Regret
50. Belly
51. Farm pen

- DOWN
1. Flavor enhancer, for short
2. Mineral suffix
3. A few
4. Takeout request
5. Wade through mud
6. Render senseless
7. Oklahoma tribe
8. Bit of butter
9. Delicate
10. Stopwatch button

SUDOCURRENT

	4		8	1				
9	3		7		2			
8		5				7		
							7	
5	2		4		6			3
	7	8					1	
1				2		3		9
3		9	6		1	4	2	7
	8	2		3	4			

WORDLADDER

Can you go from BANKS to CARTS in 6 words?  
Change one letter for each rung in the ladder.

BANKS

CARTS

MICRO  
CROSSWORD

- ACROSS
1. James or Ventura
6. Tom Clancy’s *The Sum*  
\_\_\_\_\_ *Fears*
7. Competitor
8. Title role for Kate Nelligan
9. Building projection
- DOWN
1. Superman’s father
2. Pay taxes online
3. Used coupons, say
4. Informal lingo

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

5. Actor Kemper of  
*The Office*

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S	O	U	L		B	I	B		T	B	A	R
E	S	S	O		A	W	L		R	A	N	I
A	L	E	S		R	O	I		A	L	T	O
M	O	D	E	R	N		P	I	G	L	E	T
			R	E	A				D	I	Y	
M	O	H	S		C	H	O		O	C	H	O
E	N	O			L	A	B			O	A	F
H	O	O	S	I	E	R	S		F	O	R	T
		D	U	D				E	M	U		
Y	A	W	N	E	D			S	O	R	T	O
O	V	I	D			I	V	S		R	A	V
G	E	N	A			T	E	E		O	R	A
I	C	K	Y			Z	E	D		W	A	L

4	5	8	7	6	1	9	2	3
9	2	3	4	8	5	1	7	6
7	6	1	9	3	2	8	5	4
3	4	5	2	9	7	6	1	8
6	9	2	1	4	8	7	3	5
8	1	7	6	5	3	2	4	9
2	3	6	5	7	9	4	8	1
5	7	9	8	1	4	3	6	2
1	8	4	3	2	6	5	9	7

H	I	V	E	
O	D	O	R	
G	R	I	N	D
	I	L	S	A
S	A	T	S	

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TURNS  
TURFS  
TUFFS  
CUFFS

Answers for July 28 Puzzles

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## Donkeys *(from Page 1)*

Unlike Kounellis' horses, the Magazzino donkeys live in a barn that has a certificate of compliance from the Town of Philipstown.

In the middle of the donkey corral, atop the hay feeder, is a gold-colored sculpture of a hand holding a sphere in its fingers.

Entitled "Trevis Maponos," it was created by Tuscan artist Namsal Siedlecki. Spanu said that when Siedlecki visited the museum in 2018 to discuss a commission, he became a fan of the donkeys. "I want my sculpture to be part of the daily life of the donkeys," he told Spanu.

Siedlecki said in an interview from his home in Italy that he made the piece from coins that tourists tossed into the Trevi Fountain in Rome, after he melted them down. The Vatican uses most of the money collected from the fountain to feed the poor but Siedlecki said unusable coins are sold in bulk.

The sculpture, Siedlecki said, is meant to speak to how people cast things into water to make wishes. The hand is a replica of a centuries-old wooden votive offering to the gods found preserved in water in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

"The donkeys are offered food by an offering," he explained.

The donkeys themselves were an offering from Spanu, a native of Sardinia. "I have seen these donkeys since I was born," he said. "They were our pickup trucks. They would grind olives to make olive oil."

In the early 1990s, Spanu decided to import a few donkeys. But they were nearing extinction, with fewer than 100 remaining on the island. So he turned to Texas, which he learned had more Sardinian donkeys than Sardinia.

He had two donkeys — Chip and Voyle — loaded onto a truck with horses bound for Millbrook. When the truck couldn't get down Avery Road in Garrison to the Spanu home, the donkeys were unloaded in the



A resident of the donkey corral at Magazzino scratches its back near the hay feeder and a sculpture by Tuscan artist Namsal Siedlecki.

Photo by Marco Anelli/Magazzino

parking lot near the Home Depot in Fishkill.

By 2018, the Spanu herd had grown to a dozen and their braying was irritating the neighbors. So Spanu started moving them to Magazzino. The loud males went first.

During a recent visit to the stables, one donkey was braying at others in the pen.

"That's Max," said Jay Nicholas, who works for Magazzino shuttling visitors to and from the Cold Spring train station. "What he's saying is: 'Why am I here? The females are all over there in that pen. What is this barrier

between us? It's very frustrating.'"

Nicholas is known as "the donkey whisperer" at Magazzino. "I make sure that the backs of the donkeys' ears are well-scratched," he said. "They're charming and serene animals."

Nicholas often serenades the animals with guitar or harmonica, improvising songs such as "Glad You're Still Fluffy" and "How's Your Day?"

During the pandemic quarantine, Nicholas said that the donkeys became bored

and lonely. "I would come up here and practice guitar," he said. "They would listen for a while and then go about their business. When I'd stop playing, they would look up at me. 'Why'd you stop?'"

*Editor's note: The reporter and his wife, Johanna Costa, live uphill of the donkeys; she had a different reaction to the braying than neighbors on Avery Road. "I love hearing them when I garden," Costa said. "They're my donkey friends."*



Donkey cuddles are common.



The donkeys eat a lot of hay.

Photos by Alexa Hoyer/Magazzino